



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

BULLETIN

OF

THE PENNSYLVANIA MUSEUM

JANUARY, 1908

SIXTH YEAR

NUMBER 21

MEXICAN ANTIQUITIES

The Director of the Museum, since the publication of the October number of the BULLETIN, visited Mexico in the interest of the Museum, and with a fund raised for the purpose made some important purchases for the Museum collections. These include chairs of Mexican and Spanish origin belonging to the 17th and 18th centuries; an interesting pair of Spanish stirrups of the 17th century, made of iron engraved and inlaid with silver; a pair of carved doors from the sagrario of an old Mexican church of the 16th century; a collection of prehistoric Aztec musical instruments, and a choice collection of "Talavera" maiolica made in Puebla, Mexico, between about 1680 and 1800. The musical instruments consist of rattles, whistles, flageolets, and bells. The rattles, called by the native Mexicans "ajacaxtli," are hollow balls of clay ranging from the size of a golf ball to that of a



CHAIR, CARVED, PAINTED AND GILDED
Mexican
Seventeenth Century



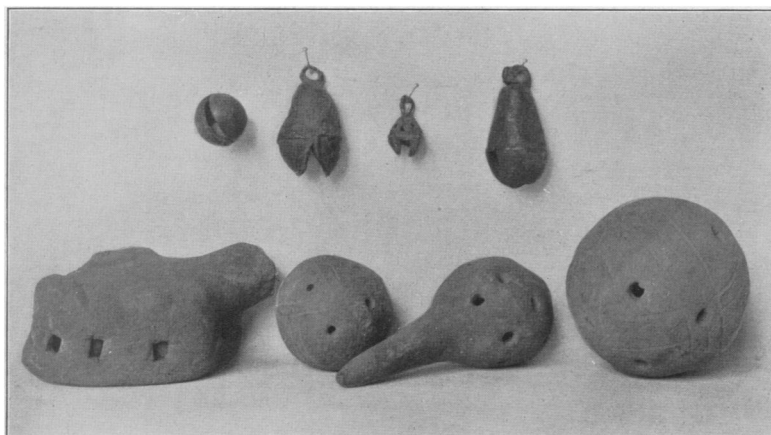
CARVED WOODEN DOORS, PAINTED, GILDED AND SILVERED
From the Sagrario of an old Mexican Church
Late Sixteenth Century

base ball, pierced with holes and enclosing little balls of clay. These rattles were used in dancing ceremonies, being held in the palm of the hand. Others are provided with short handles. The flutes, or flageolets, usually have four sound holes. One of those secured for the Museum terminates in a Death's head. The copper bells, called by the Aztecs "yotl," are in the form of small sleigh bells of mitre shape. One interesting example is of very diminutive size with an open-work pattern. A rarer variety consists of little globular earthenware bells with a movable clay ball in the centre. These are provided with two holes in the upper portion for suspension and were probably worn on the clothing. One of these button-shaped bells is shown in the accompanying illustration. Of whistles there is a great variety of forms. Some are in the shape of grotesque birds, while one represents a seated human figure with the whistle rising from the back. Another example is rudely fashioned in the form of a boar's head. Genuine Aztec musical instruments are now exceedingly rare, and it is seldom that they can be procured. Mexico is flooded, however, with fraudulent imitations of Aztec antiquities, and the collector must be on his guard against these worthless reproductions.



LARGE MAIOLICA VASE
Polychrome Decoration Showing Spanish Influence
Made at Puebla, Mexico, about 1780

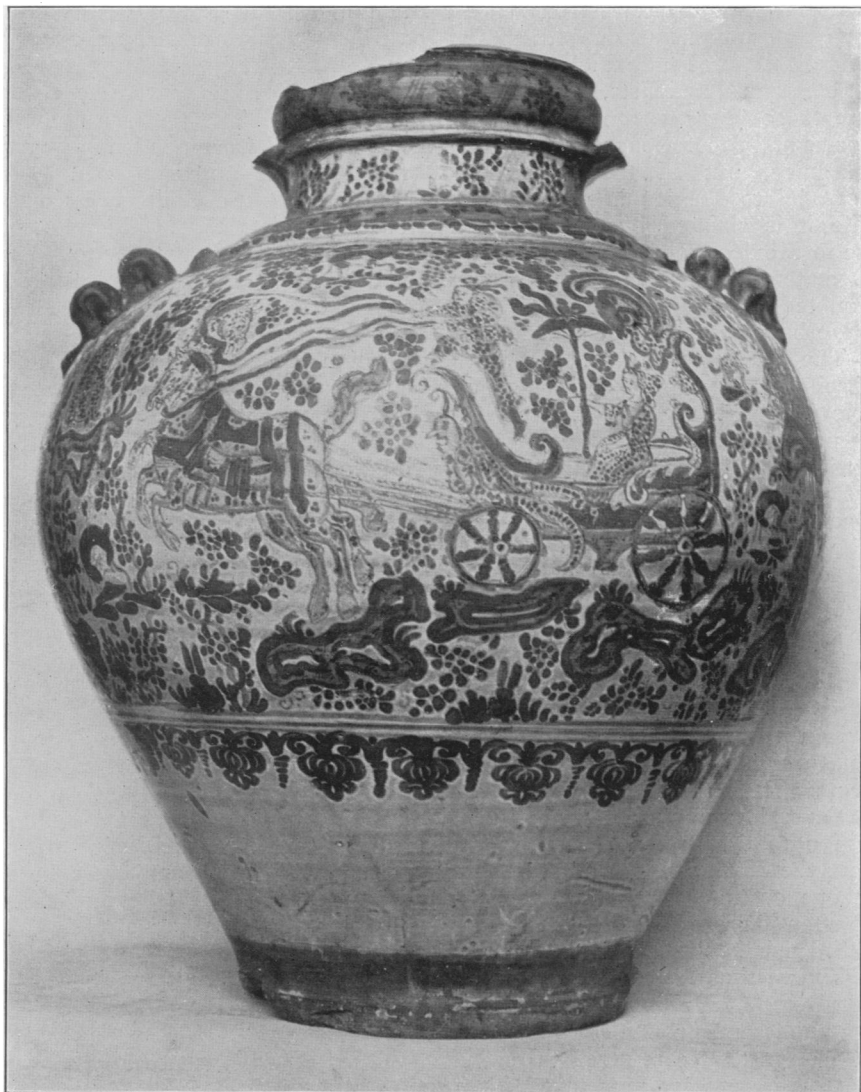
The study of the Puebla maiolica establishes several important facts which have not been previously noted. While the greater portion of the ware and tiles found in Mexico are unquestionably of Mexican manufacture, some of the older work is undoubtedly of Spanish origin, probably imported from Spain before the Mexican manufactories were firmly established. Several of the examples procured for the Museum are particularly interesting as revealing



AZTEC RATTLES AND BELLS
Pre-Columbian



AZTEC WHISTLES OF CLAY
Pre-Columbian



LARGE MAIOLICA VASE PAINTED IN BLUE CAMAIEU
Showing Italian, Spanish and Chinese Influence
Made at Puebla, Mexico, about 1750

the influence of several countries. One piece, a large jar decorated in blue camaieu, is remarkable as reflecting the art of Italy through Spain, and shows also Chinese influence. At one time Spain imported from Italy many of the best workers in various departments of art. The blue monochrome decorations which characterize the maiolica of Genoa and Savona, Italy, were appropriated by the Spanish maiolists, consequently it is not surprising that these designs figure to some extent on the old pottery of Puebla. The Chinese character of forms and decorations was not the result of Oriental workmen being brought to Mexico, but of the influence of fine Chinese porcelain which was imported into Mexico in great quantities throughout the eighteenth century. While it is claimed by certain Mexican archaeologists that Chinese potters came to Mexico from the Philippines, we have no evidence whatever to support that statement, as all of the designs which show Chinese influence are undoubtedly the work of Spanish or Mexican copyists. Not a single piece has yet been found which shows Oriental workmanship.

The most interesting object in the collection of pottery is a large bacino, or basin, twenty inches in diameter, taken from one of the oldest churches in Mexico. It is the earliest piece which has yet been brought to our attention, and probably antedates the year 1680. This interesting specimen shows Moorish influence, and is supposed to have been brought from Spain by one of the early voyagers. The design is distinctly arabesque and beautifully treated, the colors used being blue and black. It is so different in treatment from any of the other pieces obtained that it would be impossible to suppose it to be the work of one of the Puebla artists.

Of considerable interest is a circular dish of tortoise shell, or Whieldon ware, made in England between 1760 and 1780. It is of enormous size and one of the best examples of this variety of colored lead glazing that has yet come to light. Old English pottery is seldom found in Mexico. This piece was discovered in one of the antiquarian shops where it posed as a specimen of Mexican tin enameled ware. Scarcely less remarkable are two dishes of sgraffito or slip-decorated ware, evidently the work of a Spaniard, or at least reflecting Italian art through Spanish introduction.

Several examples of early Puebla maiolica are here figured. With this addition to the group of Mexican tin enameled pottery previously on exhibition, the Museum now possesses probably the most representative collection of this most interesting ware to be found anywhere. It will be remembered that attention was first called to this ware in the pages of this magazine. The old Spanish books are singularly silent on the subject and the ceramic text books have thus far made no reference to it. The Director is now preparing a monograph on this ware, to be illustrated by many of the finest examples from public and private collections.

The purchases referred to have been placed on exhibition in their several departments and are now ready for inspection.